

I had spent twenty-minutes in walking nine blocks and what had I accomplished by all of it? Enough ideas of hear-

ing myself talk to pen this essay concerning light, trivial things. Wearily, I wrote the essay and turned in.

## Conception Of Existence

ROBERT W. McKEAND

The sudden realization that life is cheap and is used to accomplish an end serves as an awakening force within us and causes us to change our entire conception of man's existence. The world lives in a fantasy of material enjoyment until its delusion explodes in bitter experience.

It was just such an experience that the world went through some four years ago. A peaceful Sunday morning in a land of tranquillity, leisure, and contentment was a typical example of the smug life we lived. It was unreasonable for anyone to believe that an end would come to our way of life so suddenly, so disastrously. Yet, as we all know today, it was such a morning, so short-lived, that a calamitous attack by the ruthless planes of a barbarous government changed into a morning of hell, a hell more realistic than any of us had ever dreamed of, a hell in which there was nothing to do but suffer until the end of endurance, and then suffer more with no chance of fighting back. Dive bombers sent our air fields into a chaos of helplessness, destruction, and death. Planes with a ball of fire emblazoned on each wing soared across those once quiet waters to loose their death-bearing fish at mighty battleship row. They pounded into the heart of the *Oklahoma*, and with each onslaught she shuddered, belched flame, and listed more. Four — five — six — would they never stop? A freak shell went down

the stack of the *Arizona*, and she burned for hours in the thick rolling flames of an oil fire, as she rested in her grave. It was the same with the others. Some settled or sank where they lay; others were stopped as they attempted to escape, but they all gave in.

And the men, the men who a moment before were full of being, confident of today, not worrying about tomorrow, what did they die for? The lucky ones—the men whose lives were snuffed out without their even knowing what happened—did they die for America? Can a man die for a cause which he is unaware of fighting for? And the unlucky ones—those who struggled with their last gasp to swim under the burning oil to safety, but who perished in the ever consuming fire—did they forfeit their lives so that democracy might live? We can not find an answer, not one that will satisfy man's set of values which covets life as the most precious of all things.

To see men only physically, as lifeless, desecrated victims of the material world is to see life as an existence which has no meaning within itself, for life in a physical sense is merely the life of our bodies. And can anything so complicated, intricate, technically complete as the human body, yet so easily destroyed, be the only meaning of our whole life? If the body is such a beautiful example of God's creation, then how much more beautiful, more perfect



must be the soul, which He created for eternity. Here we may find the motive for our existence. It is only upon our realization that the soul is the worthwhile and immortal portion of our makeup that life unfolds to us its true meaning and value. We then begin dimly to conceive God's justice in sacrificing the human body for the immortal soul. We understand why

the body can be expendable, in comparison to the soul, as the finger can be expendable to the arm. We lose our mortal and ephemeral conception of life. Time becomes unimportant because we live for an eternity, not for the short life-span of the body. We establish a new, a truer motivation. Our earth-bound life is spent in an effort to make our souls worthy of eternity.

## Night Battle

ROBERT SIMMS

A battle that was fought continuously in the Pacific Islands was the one with those adorable creatures of nature, land crabs and mosquitoes. It seemed as if the crab family was an inquisitive race that insisted on inspecting and investigating the human body and his habitat. Night was the time they came out to frolic and to paint the beaches red. One night, they carried out a plan to use me and my blankets as a ballroom. They began arriving in droves, lifting my netting and strolling nonchalantly across my body. By violent heaving, turning, and other bedroom gymnastics, I managed to toss them aside, but back they would come in full force. I finally decided that they just liked tough dance-halls, for the harder I tried to "bounce" them, the more they enjoyed it. It was right after an old square

dance, I remember, when some old crab turned the affair into a military ball by presenting a demonstration of air-might to his cohorts. By tearing a hole in my netting with his claw, he invited all the mosquitoes on Guadalcanal to come in and show their powers in maneuverability and dive bombing tactics. This luckless person was the target for tonight. I could hear them drone overhead and then peel off in smooth performance to attack my face. I covered up with my blankets, making an improvised bomb shelter, until I began to smother. Enraged, I leaped to my feet, tore my bed apart, grabbed a stick and beat the ground and general atmosphere. I then settled down in comparative peace and went to sleep. All was quiet on the Weltd Front.